

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims 1- 7, as shown below, in which deleted terms are indicated with strikethrough and/or double brackets, and added terms are indicated with underscoring. Also, please add new claim 8-11, as shown below. The following list of claims replaces all previous versions, and listings of claims in the application.

[[[]] 1. [[]]] (Currently amended) A steering ~~handle~~ system for carrying out steering by ~~rotating the~~ of a vehicle in response to rotation of a steering handle; ~~(23) about an axis (Ls) of a steering shaft (28), said steering handle (23) being grasped by both hands of an occupant sitting on a seat (33),~~

said steering system comprising

a plurality of steering shafts operatively connected with each other;

wherein ~~characterized in that, during all positions of the steering system,~~ [[said]] an axis [[Ls]] of at least one of the steering shafts [[28]] that is closest to the steering handle is inclined upwardly as it extends so as to be higher in level in a forward direction of said vehicle.

[[[]] 2. [[]]] (Currently amended) A steering ~~handle~~ system for carrying out steering of a vehicle in response to rotation of ~~by rotating the~~ a steering handle; ~~(23) about an axis (Ls) of a steering shaft (28), said steering handle (23) being grasped by both hands of an occupant sitting on a seat (33),~~ said steering system comprising a steering shaft;

wherein ~~said steering~~ characterized in that

said steering handle [[23]] includes

a left grip (24L) ~~grasped by a left hand,~~ and

a right grip (24R) ~~grasped by a right hand,~~

wherein said left grip [(24L)] and said right grip [(24R)] are rotatable about an axis [(Lg)] perpendicular to an axis [(Ls)] of the said steering shaft [(28)] for selectively performing a leftward steering or a rightward steering of said vehicle;

wherein, during steering operation, said left grip and said right grip are rotated in an operative association with each other, and in directions opposite to each other so that said left grip and said right grip move twistedly relative to each other.

[[[]] 3. [[]] (Currently amended) A steering ~~handle~~ system according to claim 2, wherein said left grip [(24L)] and said right grip [(24R)] are connected to each other by an interlocking mechanism [(30)] so as to be rotated in said opposite directions ~~from each other~~.

[[[]] 4. [[]] (Currently amended) A steering ~~handle~~ system according to claim 3, wherein the interlocking mechanism [(30)] is formed by a left bevel gear [(27L)] fixed to the left grip [(24L)], a right bevel gear [(27R)] fixed to the right grip [(24R)], and an idler bevel gear [(29)] meshed simultaneously with the left bevel gear [(27L)] and the right bevel gear [(27R)].

[[[]] 5. [[]] (Currently amended) A steering system for a vehicle, comprising

left and right operating members ~~(24L, 24R)~~ ~~grasped and operated by left and right hands of an occupant,~~

actuators ~~(14, 17)~~ for steering said vehicle, and

control ~~means (Ua, Ub)~~ units for controlling the operation of said actuators ~~(14, 17)~~ in response to the operation of said operating members ~~(24L, 24R)~~,

wherein ~~characterized in that~~ a locus of operative movement of each of said operating

members (24L, 24R) ~~by the operation provided by the occupant~~ is on a respective spherical plane ~~[(S)]~~ about a respective predetermined position (O) ~~of each of the occupant's elbows which is~~ rearward of the steering system;

wherein during steering operation, each of the left and right operating members is rotated in a same direction around respective rotational axis thereof.

[[[]] 6. [[]]] (Currently amended) A steering system for a vehicle, comprising

left and right operating members (24L, 24R) ~~grasped and operated by left and right hands of~~
~~an occupant,~~

actuators (14, 17) for steering said vehicle, and

control ~~means~~ (Ua, Ub) units for controlling the operation of said actuators (14, 17) in
response to the operation of said operating members (24L, 24R),

wherein characterized in that both of said operating members (24L, 24R), when being moved
upwards from their neutral positions, are moved in a direction ~~toward the occupant~~ outwardly
from said neutral positions thereof, and rearwardly.

[[[]] 7. [[]]] (Currently amended) A steering system for a vehicle, comprising

a steering shaft;

left and right operating members (24L, 24R) ~~grasped and operated by left and right hands~~
~~of an occupant,~~

actuators (14, 17) for steering said vehicle, and

control ~~means~~ (Ua, Ub) units for controlling the operation of said actuators (14, 17) in
response to the operation of said operating members (24L, 24R),

wherein characterized in that said left and right operating members (~~24L, 24R~~) is are rotatable about their left and right rotational axes (~~AL, AR~~), while being rotated about a steering rotational axis [(A)] of said steering shaft, and

wherein during all positions of the steering system, said left and right rotational axes (~~AL, AR~~) being inclined extend from said steering rotational axis to spread in a V-shape ~~toward the~~ occupant.

8. (New) A steering system according to claim 1, wherein said at least one of the steering shafts is inclined at about 30° from a horizontal plane.

9. (New) A steering system according to claim 2, wherein said axis of said steering shaft is inclined at about 30° from a horizontal plane.

10. (New) A steering system according to claim 1, wherein said steering system is a steer-by-wire steering system.

11. (New) A steering system according to claim 7, wherein said left and right rotational axes of said left and right operating members are arranged such that they form an angle of approximately 70° with each other.